Planning for Freedom:

Patterns in Sex Trade Exit Narratives Among Women in Kolkata

This study represents an effort to provide local non-governmental organizations and service providers with relevant information regarding exit processes from the perspective of women formerly in the sex trade in Kolkata, India. Exit from the sex trade has become a unique field of study, especially within the past decade. Although several studies have been conducted in Western countries regarding the factors surrounding exiting the sex trade, the discourse lacks such a study based in a highly controlled trade in which social and institutional complexities change the equation of what may in other circumstances constitute a free choice by the prostituted individual. The study looks at the narratives of 19 women who have left the sex trade in Kolkata over the past 0-14 years, in an effort to determine *patterns of perceived barriers and facilitators to the exit proces*s. The study was be conducted through an initial focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews, a final focus group discussion, and community non-participant observation.

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Table of Contents

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Research Context

Much of what is known about Kolkata's sex trade in the international forum surrounds two topics: human trafficking and sex workers' community-based organizations (Steen et al, 2015; Decker, 2013; Sircar & Dutta, 2011; Sen et al, 2009; Nair, 2007). Indeed, there is both a need to acknowledge and respond to the immense control that is exhibited in the lives of the individuals in the sex trade (much of it amounting to both the international and Indian definitions of trafficking for sexual exploitation) and to provide a platform for their voices to be heard over and above the desires other people may have for their lives. The complexity of the social situation exhibited in Kolkata's many red light areas is not to be ignored. However, there is a softer voice telling a different story, one that has remnants of the others, but chooses to move beyond it; this is the story of exit.

Red light or brothel areas have existed in Kolkata ever since it was founded. Individuals in the sex trade here come from across India and beyond, mainly from other parts of West Bengal and Bangladesh (Sen et al, 2009). It is a common for individuals to be prostituted at a young age and move into managerial positions as they age out of the work. This is, however, not the story of everyone.

There are those who leave the sex trade through the actions of another (through police "rescue" of minors- those under the age of 18- and removal of forced majors - those 18 and over who have not consented to involvement in sex work), and those who *desist* (a term used to refer to the act of ending involvement in illicit activity).. Several social businesses exist in Kolkata solely for the sake of women and men who wish to terminate or avoid involvement in the sex trade. One such business and their partner social organization have provided the platform and impetus for this study. The women working at this business have been out of sex work for varying amounts of time, and have unique stories that can shed light on the general experience of exiting.

Given the complex social structure and varying levels of physical and psychological control evident in Kolkata's sex industry, I sought in this study to answer the following question: what is the influence of perceived barriers and facilitators on the exit narratives of women from Kolkata's sex industry? The study was be inductive in nature, with the dependent variable being the "ease of a woman's exit from the sex trade." Based on research, I projected independent variables to include among others: degree of control within trade; financial situation and number of dependents; informal network support; physical and mental health; capacity for independent and critical thinking; current accommodation; degree of chemical dependency; education; individual agency, and; employment prospects.

These independent variables became more clear during the process of the research.

Figure 1: Research Variables

Dependent Variable
Ease of woman's exit from sex trade

Independent Variable: barriers to exit

Independent Variable: exit facilitators
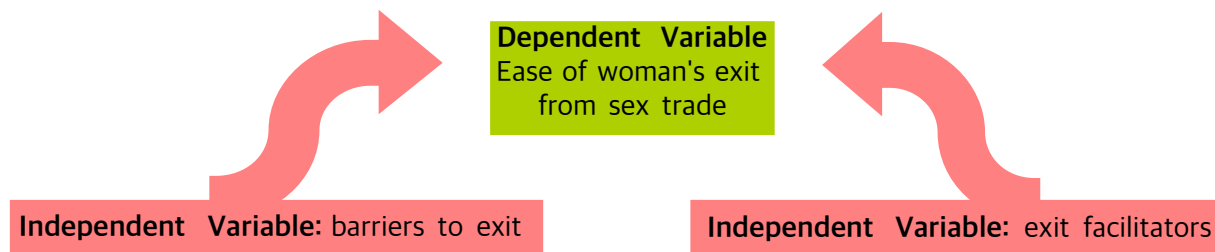
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Exit Processes and Research with Victims of Violence

To inform and direct my study of exit narratives among women in the sex trade in Kolkata, India, I have examined the current global discourse on the concept of exiting alongside some perspectives surrounding the local sex trade. I have also considered several studies on the impacts of research on victims of violence as well as narrative analysis to help shape my research methodology to minimize risk and maximize benefit to participants.

Global Sex Trade Discourse

The sex trade exists as a global phenomenon, not only in presence but in movement of participants. From the movement of trafficking victims to sex tourists, the supply and demand involved in the trade exist across national borders. Given its international characteristic, it is important that a study of a specific phenomenon in a city's sex trade be situated within the global discourse. This study will also provide a basis for the diction utilized in the remainder of this paper. Major themes in this discourse include anti-stigmatization, heterogeneity, entrance and harm in sex work.

Anti-Stigmatization

Discussions of rhetoric surrounding the sex trade are common. UK NSWP (2004) calls for a move away from judgmental views of individuals involved in the sex trade. Along a similar vein, recent pro-sex-work feminist literature distances itself from a perspective that views sex work as necessarily inclusive of violence (NK NSWP, 2004; Sircar & Dutta, 2011). Others find it more important to distinguish sex work from exploitation and trafficking (Zimmerman, 2013; Kotiswaran, 2012; Nair, 2007).

Still others take issue with a global conversation that purportedly ignores the rights violations suffered by the majority of individuals involved in the sex trade internationally (Farley & Barkan, 1998). Kotiswaran decries "the conflation of trafficking with... sex work" which has "perpetuated a tendency to overlook... other highly exploitative conditions that may exist within which no trafficking is involved" (2012:250).

Heterogeneity of ST

Heterogeneity is a key theme in much of the literature (Sinha, 2015; Mayhew & Mossman, 2007; Dalla, 2006; Nag, 2006; UK NSWP, 2004), requiring specificity in studies and understanding of the limitation of an individual study's generalizability. In UK NSWP's paper, *Response to "Paying the Price",* the group stresses the variations in the sex trade, individuals' experiences of the sex trade, and effects of the sex trade (2004). UK NSWP notes differences in "the contractual nature of the sexual relationship where money is exchanged; the method of contact between the buyer and the seller; and the organisation and management of the market, ranging from coercive pimping, an employee relationship, to autonomous self-employed sex workers" (2004:29).

Entrance

As my study takes place in the context of the sex trade in India (specifically Kolkata), it is important to have a more local view of the sex trade, especially one that considers the factors leading to entrance into the trade. Although my study will focus on exit, a general understanding of some commonalities in entrance narratives will aid in the construction of a backdrop to the process leading up to exit.

I n *Sex Workers in India,* the author cites the following main reasons given by participants in nation-wide surveys of women in India's sex trade when asked what caused them to join the trade (outside of predisposing factors): "economic distress"; "deception"; "influence of anti-social persons"; "trapped into it by traffickers"; "kidnapped and then sold", and "seduced by some means" (Nag, 2006). Among women with a "mobile" role (commonly known as flying sex workers) in Kolkata's sex trade, one study suggests that a combination of early childhood abuse or neglect alongside continual marginalization and sexual exploitation often precede the entry of even the less coerced women (Sinha, 2015).

Harms

The legalization or decriminalization of sex work is another major discussion in today's discourse surrounding the sex trade, with feminist views promoting both sides of the argument (UK NSWP 2004, other citations needed). In India, sex work is not illegal, however it "becomes an offence when there is commercial exploitation of a person" (Nair, 2007:1). Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be defined as the sexual exploitation of an individual for the commercial benefit of a third party, an offense for which Indian Law holds all exploiting individuals accountable (Nair, 2007).

Human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation is often referred to as sex trafficking. It is a common trend worldwide, and India has been listed as a "sex trafficking" source, transit and destination nation by the US Department of State's Trafficking in Persons

Report (US Department of State, 2014). Local news sources regularly report on local and international instances of Indian women and girls being bought and sold (Arora, 2015). Director General of the Indian Police Service, P.M. Nair clarifies the three main components of human trafficking in Indian law: "Displacement of a person from one community to another... Exploitation of the trafficked person... Commercialization of the exploitation and commodification of the victim" (Nair, 2007:2). He outlines the multitude of rights violations suffered by an individual trafficked for CSE, including displacement, wrongful restraint and confinement, rape, defamation and unlawful compulsory labor.

Although these are specific to victims of sex trafficking, studies have led other authors to claim that based on the findings of "extreme violence suffered by these respondents", sex work in general cannot be understood "as a neutral activity or simply as a vocational choice", but rather "a form of violence against women" (Farley & Barkan, 1998:47). In Farley and Barkan's study of 130 individuals involved in street-based sex work in San Francisco, 68% of respondents "met criteria for a PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] diagnosis" (1998:42). The majority of participants reported childhood sex abuse, physical assault related to sex work, rape related to sex work, current or previous homelessness, and drug issues.

Roe-Sepowitz et al (2012) also refer to the general experience of exploitation and violence combined with "mental and physical health problems" inherent in sex work. Mayhew & Mossman (2007) suggest that the reality of violence exists whether or not sex work is decriminalized.

Indian law is seen as being more broad in its definition of coercion than the internationally accepted Polermo Protocols. For adults involved in the sex trade, consent may not preclude trafficking. According to Nair, "If the consent was obtained under duress, coercion, fear or any pressure, then the consent has no meaning and, therefore all such instances amount to trafficking" (2007:4). Coercion in Indian law has a much broader meaning than it does elsewhere, and includes "the force of circumstance" which can mean "economic vulnerability, ignorance and poverty" among other things (Kotiswaran, 2012:257).

Indeed, coercion appears to play a major role in the life of individuals involved in the sex trade in India. Distinctions between categories of sex work in Kolkata specifically are made according to variations in control (Nag 2006, Bhattacharyya & Mehta 2015). Nag (2006) reports a low rate of condom use among customers, even following major initiatives to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Aside from low condom use, women in India's sex trade reported being uncomfortable with many acts required by customers (Nag, 2006).

Exiting

UK NSWP states, "It is misleading to assume that all sex workers wish to exit, or are at point where they feel empowered to do so" (2004:80). However, Farley and Barkan (1998) reveal that due the prevalence of violence and trafficking within the sex trade, exiting is not only a necessary process for many individuals, but is actively desired and planned. Recently, the exit process has also become a unique field of study.

Exiting Is A Process

Although limited, the current exiting discourse has an overall consensus on the concept of exiting as a difficult process often involving multiple re-entries before complete exit (Bindel et al, 2014; Mayhew & Mossman, 2007; Dalla, 2006; Manopaiboon et al, 2003). The process is viewed both in a psychological sense and a structural sense (Roe-Sepowitz et al, 2012; Månsson & Hedlin, 1999). One study indicates a negative correlation between trauma history and success with formal exiting programs (Reo-Sepowitz et al, 2012).

Several studies purport the identification of turning points or significant events within the lives of individuals in the sex trade that influence the exit process; these may include such experiences as as pregnancy or relationship loss (Bindel et al, 2014; Mayhew & Mossman, 2007; Dalla, 2006; Månsson & Hedin, 1999). Depending on the situation, some of these turning points may be considered barriers, facilitators, or both.

Definition of Exit?

Baker et al (2010) integrate the current literature's models of exit with non-sex industry specific models of behavioral change and role exit. Their integration takes into consideration the complexity of exiting the sex industry and the criticality of both informal and formal supports, in addition to internal motivations. They consider the recurring theme of new identity creation after exiting the sex trade. The model involves the following six stages, many of which will be returned to throughout the cyclical exit process: immersion, awareness, deliberate preparation, initial exit, reentry, final exit.

"Final exit" is a vague term as reentry is always possible and there exists no agreed upon length of time out of the industry to constitute "exit." Dalla (2006) alludes to the indefinity of the term by using the alternative term "exit success." For their study's purposes, Roe-Sepowitz et al (2012) chose 90 days as the marker of success in a prostitution-exiting program for the following reason: "we can infer from substance abuse programming research that the women who remain in the program for at least 90 days exhibit characteristics of women who will remain in the program to completion and successfully exit prostitution" (p. 72).

Although there exists much ambiguity regarding the definition of exit, final exit or successful exit, Baker et al (2010) suggest that it entails the maintenance of behavior change and new identity formation ("ex role"). However, "specific parameters… delineating final exit are exceedingly difficult to define" (Baker et al, 2010:593). They acknowledge that it is not unusual for a woman exhibiting all the behaviors of an "exited" individual to re-enter, given the complexities of her situation. Bindel et al (2014) state that the term "exit" may not even apply to women who have been trafficked, as leaving the sex trade may more accurately constitute more "escape" or "rescue."

Barriers to Exit

The exit literature regularly refers to barriers that prevent individuals involved in the sex trade from exiting if or when they want to. Dalla (2006) adds that there exist subsequent barriers to *sustaining* the exit, and that these vary between types of sex work. Obvious barriers include lack of education and employability, financial constraints, criminal

records, negative relationships or loss of positive relationships, coercion, lack of valuable support services, chemical addiction and physical or mental health issues (Bindel et al, 2014; Roe-Sepowitz et al, 2012; Mayhew & Mossman, 2007; Dalla, 2006). In addition, difficulties in sustaining exit include job stability, psychological processing, new relationships and a new lifestyle (Mayhew & Mossoman, 2007; Dalla, 2006).

Economic factors provide some of the strongest impetus for women remaining in or re-entering the sex trade (Dalla, 2006; Manopaiboon et al, 2003). This is often tied to debt but varies by culture depending on societal expectations and was seen as especially strong in a study conducted in Thailand (Manopaiboon et al, 2003). Women in several studies acknowledged that the social stigma attached to sex work would decrease their chances of getting a job after exiting, although this was not so in Thailand (Manopaiboon et al, 2003).

The barrier of coercion and violence is not discussed to a large extent in most exit literature. However, Bindel et al (2014) include it as a barrier and point out that the heterogeneity of sex work requires an understanding of the varying degrees of control and coercion within different individual's experiences.

Facilitators of Exit

According to Bindel et al (2014), violence is one of many barriers that can alternately help *facilitate* exit when the desire for a situation to change becomes a driving force in an individual's decision to leave that situation. Facilitators of exit from the sex trade include such factors as financial stability, education and training, support in significant relationships or community, removal from negative surroundings (including former customers), criminalization of sex work (though this is contested), social capital, drug treatment, and the attitude of the individual toward sex work (Bindel et al, 2014; Mayhew & Mossman, 2007; Dalla, 2006; Manopaiboon et al, 2003). Supportive intimate partners, family members or communities have been shown to improve a woman's ability to leave sex work and remain exited (Dalla, 2006; Manopaiboon et al, 2003).

Women have commented that "a strong will" could help them overcome the allures of the money involved in sex work (Manopaiboon et al, 2003:46). The same study suggests that women who are more jaded by sex work will be more likely to exit successfully. Another internal process facilitating exit is the development of a new identity outside of sex work, as well as trust in both individuals and services (Bindel at al, 2014).

Exiting services comprise another major portion of exit literature, and usually involve drug rehabilitation (Bindel et al, 2014; Roe-Sepowitz et al, 2012). Bindel et al (2014) have found that such programs are usually not holistic or individually customized enough and require more identity-focused and asset-based assistance. The literature does not identify any facilitators as standalone solutions for individuals desiring to exit, although social assets and informal networks stand out as major components across the board.

The Spectrum of Decision

Bindel et al (2014) found that once women in their study had made the decision to leave sex work, it did not take them long to complete the process. Their study of women in the United Kingdom included those considered self-exiters who had minimal support when

they exited the sex trade. On the other end of the spectrum are trafficked individuals. The same study acknowledges that victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation will have very different "exit" processes than others, suggesting instead the use of the term "escape" (Bindel et al, 2014). Bindel et al (2014) also suggest another word that is commonly used in India: rescue. The nation's Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 (ITPA) requires the "rescue" of minor girls from sex work (Nair, 2007:14).

Primacy of Personal or Contextual Exit Factors

The current literature contains a variety of opinions on the primacy of internal or external exit factors. Baker et al (2010) consider these barriers to be individual, relational, structural and social. Månsson & Hedin conclude that an individual's internal strategies and commitment are the determining factors for exit success (1999). This centers around the concept of resilience, of which Baker et al (2010) say, "Resilient women are less vulnerable to stress and strain because they can adapt and cope" (p. 585). Sanders (2007) focuses on external, structural factors as inhibiting or enabling exit success.

Agency and Control

To address the question of why many individuals who receive significant institutional support still fail to successfully exit the street-level sex trade, Cimino (2012) proposes that internal barriers and facilitators (attitudes, norms, self-efficacy) may determine the exiting ability of some women. She proposes a testable theory of exit prediction based on behavioral prediction models, entitled "the integrative model of behavioral prediction" (Cimino, 2012:1240). The model proposes that the likelihood of a behavior increases with intention to perform that behavior, possession of necessary skills and abilities, and facilitating environmental factors.

For the purpose of predicting exit from the sex trade, Cimino adds agency and societal context as moderators of intention. Intention is composed of attitudes, norms and self-efficacy, all of which are personality components highly influenced by one's community. Cimino suggests that determining the intention of an individual to leave the sex trade (along with other contextual, environmental and skill factors) could help social agencies tailor interventions more successfully for specific individuals. "For example," she says, "if a prostituted woman has not formed intentions to exit, interventions can be developed to address and change her attitudes, norms, or self-efficacy... [Or] if a woman has intentions to exit, then the intervention can focus on building her skills or removing environmental constraints" (Cimino, 2012:1236).

De-identification and "New Normal"

As alluded to above, trust, imagination and alternate identity formation play major roles in the exit process (Bindel et al, 2014; Baker et al, 2010; Månsson & Hedin, 1999). Mayer & Richardson (2010) share results from a focus study on the process of dis-identification and identification with a new group among formerly prostituted women; the "new group" is a Christian community, as all subjects were participants in a Christian exiting program. They conclude that successful exit is connected to religious group affiliation,

similar to Dalla (2006), and link this to a change in narratives expressed by interview subjects.

Their results showed that "newcomers" were more likely to associate with the larger "living hell" story of what they experienced in the sex trade, while those who had exited longer had moved on to considering "what we are like now." The authors conclude that de-stigmatization for the research subjects entails identification with this new community. They consider that the narrative unit allows for greater understanding of multiple identity management and the integration of personal and group stories.

<div align="center">Working With Victims of Violence</div>

As my research will involve working with victims of violence, I conducted a brief survey of studies on the subject. Although I did not specifically be asking questions related to intimate partner violence and child abuse, based on the information above I assumed that many of the participants would likely have experienced one or both of these, and therefore may bring them up in interviews.

Responding to Concerns of Re-Traumatization

Research among vulnerable population is often a concern for researchers and ethics review boards, especially when sensitive subjects are involved. Many people worry that subjects will find participation in research to be "distressing" (Edwards & Sylaska, 2014:224). Others take it further, expressing concern that individuals will "experience further traumatization from participating in these studies" (McClain & Frederick Amar, 2013:482). Recent studies, however, suggest that sensitive subject research among vulnerable populations not only does not generally result in further traumatization, but can often be a benefit to the participants (Edwards & Sylaska, 2014; Hamberger & Ambuel, 2014; McClain & Frederick Amar, 2013). This has been proven even in a study conducted among individuals who were facing intimate partner violence at the time of the study (Hamberger & Ambuel, 2014).

Emotional stress was reported in the research processes, but to a lesser degree than expected. In one study, greater emotional reaction to research participation was reported among individuals with histories of violence, higher levels of PTSD and depression, and dissatisfaction in relationships, as may be expected (Edwards & Sylaska, 2014). Yet, in the same study, participants with PTSD and depression expressed greater benefits in participation than did other participants.

The authors conclude that the research process can be and often is enlightening to participants. McClain & Frederick Amar go so far as to say that the narration of traumatic events involved in their study was "essential to healing and moving through the recovery process" (2013:485). The authors state that participants indicated a feeling of helping others through their participation in research relating to child abuse (McClain & Frederick Amar, 2013).

Using a Narrative Methodology

The use of storytelling in qualitative research has been shown to both enable processing of events by participation and increase potential information available to the investigator (Whiffin et al, 2014; McClain & Frederick Amar, 2013; Fraser, 2004). Narrative research is a qualitative research methodology in which the unit of analysis is a story. The research process involves meaningful understanding of storytelling, not simply answering of questions and gathering of pre-determined facts (Whiffin et al, 2014; Fraser, 2004). Semi-structured interviews are preferred over questionnaires, in an empowering process akin to the now mainstream participatory approaches that has "the potential to validate the knowledge of 'ordinary people'" (Fraser, 2004:184).

Fraser (2004) encourages a process of interpreting individual transcripts, comparing and contrasting several narratives and linking these with larger political or social themes. Whiffin et al (2014) affirm the first two processes, but affirms that narrative analysis is less than concise in what it entails. Analysis can be done through the help of coding major themes or on a line-by-line basis. Whiffin et al (2014) consider it essential that quotations from stories are included in any narrative research.

Knowledge Gap

Whereas most of the currently available studies on exit process from the sex trade come from societies where trafficking is not a major issue, my study will be conducted in the context of a highly controlling sex trade into which many women enter against their will. The current exit discourse lacks a solid understanding of the uniqueness of the exit process among women experiencing extreme coercion and lack of control within the sex trade.

For women who by and large cannot be seen to have chosen their circumstances, it can be assumed that the exit process will be vastly different from those with greater freedom of choice (Bindel et al, 2014). There is a dearth of studies surrounding the extent to which individual character and planning factor into the exit process of this population of women, as compared to external formal or informal support.

While acknowledging that there are innumerable children and adults for whom exit from the sex trade does not constitute a possible personal decision, I propose to study a population whose circumstances within the sex trade evidence both extreme lack of control and some degree of choice regarding exit. To conduct this in Kolkata, India is most appropriate given the prevalence of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation (Nag, 2006; Nair, 2007). My study will focus on the uniqueness of their highly exploitative conditions and the impact these had on their exit narrative.

Application

Based on the present discourse on the global sex trade, it is clear that I must consider the concepts of anti-stigmatization, heterogeneity, entrance and harms, and specify a stance on rhetoric. Specifically, the prevalence of coercion and exploitation evident in India's sex trade influenced how I framed questions for my proposed focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews.

My study neither assumes full control over decision-making by women in Kolkata's sex trade, nor focuses on or discusses the need for rescue of minors or fully-controlled majors. Rather, it situates itself realistically within the context of study participants- those women whose complex situations of control within the sex trade still allow some opportunity for choice relating to exit- in a manner that may create a bridge between the camps of exploitation and free choice in the current exiting dialogue, and the general dialogue surrounding the sex trade within India. As it is uncertain what constitutes final or successful exit, I will attempt to define this from the perspective of my study participants.

In my study, I choose to avoid the term "sex worker" or "prostitute" and refer instead to "individuals in the sex trade," as that does not identify individuals with a term they may or may not choose for themselves (Bindel et al, 2014). When my study requires me to be specific, I use the term "prostituted women" to acknowledge that they are the ones directly involved in the sex work, but that this is not necessarily a result of their free will. For generalizability, I refer to "the sex trade" and "sex work" as these are inanimate entities that include both elective and forced participation. The use of these terms also attempts to bring to mind other types of labour that may be forced.

Mayhew & Mossman (2007) suggest that the literature on sex trade entrance is more relevant to prevention than it is to exiting, except when the reasons for entering continue as reasons for remaining in sex work. I am unsure as to whether or not this is true in Kolkata, although I imagine that finances are a factor in both entering and remaining. Thus, I will likely need to access more in-depth information surrounding reasons for entering the sex trade in Kolkata specifically. I need to do some more of those readings before this literature review can be considered complete.

Cimino's theoretical article outlines most mindfully the role of agency and control in the sex trade exit narratives of women worldwide (2010). Though the theory comes from a western perspective, it does not preclude the significance of societal and institutional influences. I will look for signs of this theme of agency and control in the narratives of my study participants. It begs the question of whether the main factors surrounding exit are internal or external, although the reality is more nuanced than that. Baker et al (2010) provide the most integrated and practical theory. These two studies will be most significant for my study.

Dalla's interviews with women who had previously exited the sex trade in the United States involved semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (2006). Bindel et al (2014) concur with the process of asset-based responses - including new identity construction - to the experiences of women exiting sex work. I believe that a narrative approach to this research will enable the interview process to be open-ended enough that participants are able to share freely the parts of their narrative they feel comfortable with, and yet be structured enough that it ends on a positive note for each individual, remembering the internal strength required in even beginning the exiting process. The ability to participate in event narration for personal processing of trauma along with the goal that the resulting research should help prevent or intervene in potential future experiences of trauma by others can also be seen as a benefit of research participation.

In the overview of experiences of participants in vulnerable and sensitive subject research, authors suggest a low rate of distress and high rate of positive feedback from participants. I trust that this will be the experience of my research participants, but there are several things to keep in mind in order to mitigate any risks and maximize benefit. In Farley & Barkan's study (1998) they outline the symptoms of PTSD, including those signifying type D (hyperarousal). These were important for me to familiarize myself with when planning my interview sessions.

McClain & Frederick Amar (2013) found that many potential participants were happy to participate but prior to consenting wanted background information about the investigators and why they were interested in the research topic. I provided this during recruitment. Hamberger & Ambuel (2014) conclude in their research with survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) in a primary care setting, that research participants (even those experiencing IPV at the time of the study) did not report increased risk due to participation, and that this is possible "as long as it is done in a manner respectful of patient autonomy, privacy, and confidentially, and in an emotionally supportive environment" (p. 345).

I ensured these things in my study as the participants were not in the situations they discussed in the interviews, their names were not collected, I worked with my supervisor to ensure confidentiality, and all conversations were held in a safe environment known to the participants and where they had constant access to a counsellor and medical nurse.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

My chosen qualitative methodology was conducted for the sake of understanding how and why people act, through fieldwork, seeking a full understanding of the subject with verification of findings by participants (Gray, 2009). I have outlined data collection methods in the table below. The orientation of my research was toward processes.

I utilized maximum variation sampling for my main data collection, recruiting potential participants who have spent short/medium/long periods outside of the sex trade. Initially, staff at my partner organization created a chart categorizing potential participants by number of years since they have left the sex trade. I split these over 100 names into three categories, according to those who had left the trade 0-2 years ago, 4-6 years ago, and around 10 years ago. I chose an equal number of potential participants randomly from each category, and approached them during participant recruitment. I ended up with 19 interviewees and 24 total participants.

When combined with the focus of my study, the story-telling nature of the local (Bengali) culture and the narrative-focused weekly therapy sessions attended by my interview participants suggest narrative to be an appropriate unit of analysis for this study. Recent studies show that event narration fostered in properly structured studies can be part of participants' healing processes (Edwards & Sylaska, 2014; Hamberger & Ambuel, 2014; McClain & Frederick Amar, 2013). Open-ended, private, semi-structured interviews created an appropriate environment for such event narration. Focus groups provided some background information to research and feedback on research results, which is especially important in research such as mine in which extensive ethnographic work is difficult to conduct (Desai & Potter). In my study, focus group discussions provided information and perspectives on exiting which I could not gain from community observation due to the risk it would pose potential participants.

For my first focus group discussion, I was only able to gather four women from the production unit. These women had been out of the sex trade for between 0 and 14 years. The questions encouraged conversation on the topics and revealed realities that differed from those suggested by the literature. My second focus group discussion was conducted with staff of the business' partner social organization, including a staff nurse, social workers and field workers. The purpose was to receive more varied input on the concepts that had surfaced in the interviews to determine credibility, and to bring organization staff into the research process.

Table 1: Data Collection Methods

Category	Participants	Specifics	Goals
Focus Group Discussions	1 groups of 4 women from production unit; 1 group of 5 female staff of partner organization	1 FGD held before interviews begin, 1 after interviews; group composed of women who work together	1st group: to ascertain a local definition of "exit" and what issues women who have been through the process find important 2nd group: to bring forward a few major themes from interviews to determine credibility
Semi-structured Interviews	19 individual women from production unit (including FGD#1 participants)	Majority open-ended questions asked in Bengali; audio recording and post hoc note-taking; 1 interview per participant	To gain minimal quantitative data to be used for organizing stories for analysis; to acquire complete exit narratives, including indications of both barriers and facilitators
Observation	Public; anyone in red light area; women visiting drop-in center	Informal non-participant observation in community served by host organization; 1-2 hours per day, 2-3 days per week, 8-10 weeks; no identifying information noted; no direct questions asked	Increased sensitivity to local issues and social realities to increase reliability; learn local jargon surrounding research topic

Validity

I have attempted to ensure internal validity (credibility) through methodological triangulation whereby I retrieved data from multiple sites and populations, including literature, community observation, focus group discussions and interviews. I conducted my research in two places. The first was among women presently in the sex trade at a community drop-in center in a major red light area. The second was among women who have already exited and are currently working at a production unit close to the red light district. I have given voice to research participants through focus group discussions and open-ended interview questions. I also conducted regular reviews of the literature for external validity, but acknowledge the limitations to the generalizability of any research conclusions. Quotations are not used to prove hypotheses, but only to illustrate conclusions made based on analysis with the permission of research participants.

Research Guide and Assistants

Although I am relatively fluent in Bengali and conducted all interviews and focus group sessions in Bengali, an indigenous translator helped me adjust interview questions in order to ensure they are culturally appropriate and understandable. My on-site supervisor assisted me in participant recruitment. A local fieldworker was with me every day in the red light district. For translation purposes, I had two Bengali women working with me, one to translate all interview recordings and the other to back translate.

Process

Both focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were held in Bengali on site at the production unit. Aside from the participants, only I was present. With the permission of participants, I recorded the interviews with an audio recorder in order to provide these to my translators and in order to recall the words of the participants. The directors of the production unit and the social arm were not informed who ultimately chose to participate in the study and who did not.

Ethical Considerations

Due to the vulnerable population with whom I worked and the sensitivity of the topic, I needed my research proposal to pass the full ethics review process at APU. The vulnerability of the population of women currently engaged in the sex trade had led me to prefer an ethnographic approach to data collection in that area. Among the less vulnerable population I utilized a more strategic participatory method in the secure and closed environment provided by the business. To minimize risk to all involved, I did not record the names of any participants unless they express their desire for me to do so. I kept informed consent forms separate from any identifying information.

To ensure both voluntary participation and informed consent, initial recruitment was conducted by my research guide. She provided my selected potential participants with some details of the study, several days after which I returned with consent forms to those interested in participating (read verbally in Bengali). I have not and will not publish the true identities of either my community informants or the identity of the organization or

production unit where the research took place. During the research process, all interview participants had access to the counsellor and nurse on staff at the business.

      Recent studies suggest that sensitive subject research among vulnerable populations does not generally result in further traumatization and can often be a benefit to the participants (Edwards & Sylaska, 2014; Hamberger & Ambuel, 2014; McClain & Frederick Amar, 2013). This has been proven even in a study conducted among individuals who were facing intimate partner violence at the time of the study (Hamberger & Ambuel, 2014). In a study of the impact of research on child abuse survivors, McClain & Frederick Amar (2013) state that participants indicated a feeling of helping others through their participation. I hope that a clearer understanding of the barriers to and facilitators of exiting the sex trade will enable more targeted programs by local organizations in order to ultimately assist women who choose and are able to exit in favor of another life. This research should benefit individuals whose current circumstances resemble past circumstances of research participants.

Figure 2: Data Collection and Analysis Process

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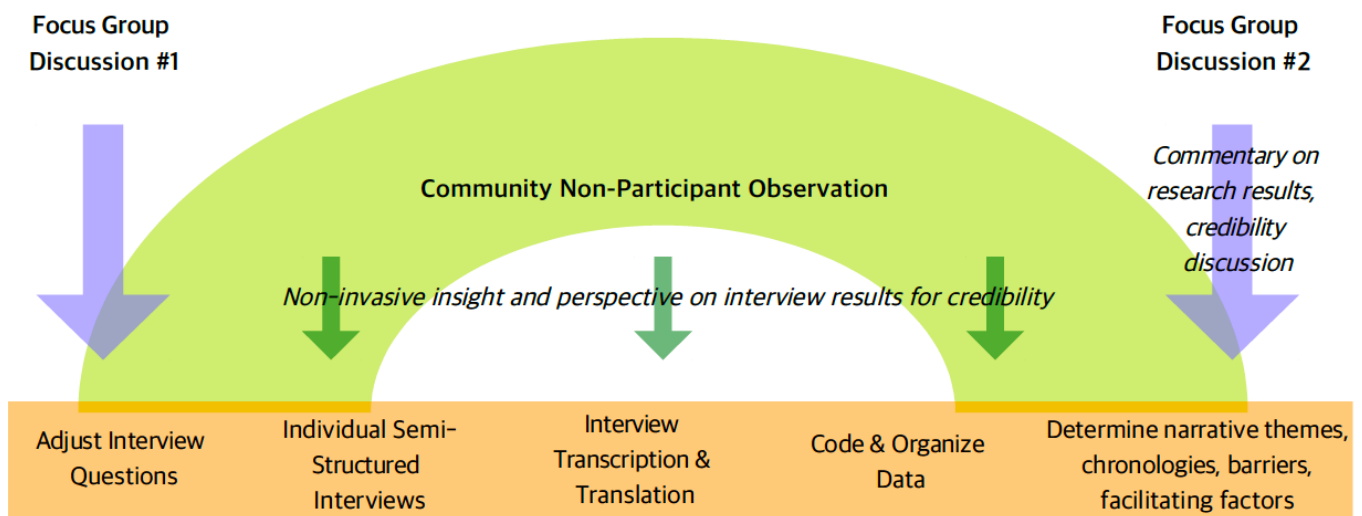
CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Data Analysis

My units of analysis were the stories told by research participants primarily through semi-structured interviews designed to promote storytelling (Whiffin et al, 2014; McClain & Frederick Amar, 2013; Gray, 2009; Fraser, 2004). I had initially intended to conduct a purely narrative analysis of the data. Narrative analysis is "the analysis of a chronologically told story, with a focus on how the various elements of the story are sequenced" (Gray, 2009:171). However, restrictions in time and my expertise in the Bengali language encouraged me to alter my methodology.

After collecting any data, I transcribed memos made after the event. My translator transcribed audio recordings from Bengali into English, and a secondary translator back translated. The main source of data for this study was the semi-structured interviews, while the focus group discussions and non-participant observation acted to support or discredit any information gleaned from these interviews. After receiving my translations, I read them over while listening to the audio recordings to ensure accuracy of English grammar. I then listened to the recordings again and took notes of my impressions. With the help of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software *NVivo for Mac*, I stored and coded all my data in one place.

Robert & Shenhav (2014) consider that narratives are both the fabric of human existence and representational devices. They are used to communicate and represent ideas; they also structure human rationality. In terms of narrative research, a narrative analysis may be "a paradigm in itself," "a specific axiological option," or "a set of analytical strategies" (Robert & Shenhav, 2014:8). That is, for some, narrative analysis means simply analyzing narratives as regular units of qualitative or quantitative analysis, while for others they analyze narratives in terms of their unique features: "elements such as events, characters, setting, point of view, and interpretations of personal stories" (Robert & Shenhav, 2014:9), as well as sequence. From the narrative axiological perspective, narrative is used in the research process for the sake of empowering the participants to tell their stories the way they understand them.

I have chosen to view narrative as both an approach and an object. It is both an axiology and a part of the research material. Robert and Shenhav stipulate that using narrative as an object requires clear definition of this object for the sake of validity (2014). For example, narrative conditions might include "non-randomness… causality… structure of unity… problem solving aspect… and intentionality" (Robert & Shenhav, 2014:11).

My limited linguistic capacity in Bengali suggests that a purely narrative analysis would not do justice to the data collected. Therefore, I combined methods of data analysis to include methods that give credence to not only how the story is told, but the content of the story (Merrill, 2007).

Floersh et al's three-pronged model combines the theme identification of thematic analysis with subsequent theory-generating of grounded theory and storied understanding of experiences possible through narrative analysis (2010). It enables a more holistic view of narratives shared in interviews that considers not only themes but timelines and plot to generate theories and conclusions. In the authors' own research they found comparisons in interview narratives that produced "a plot connecting medication themes and dimensions and provided the dynamic activity moving the narrative toward an ending" (Floersh et al, 2010:418).

However, as an artist I struggle with such a scientific and structured approach to gaining knowledge, especially from art (of which narrative is a form). Additionally, I was unsure if there would *be* an "ending" to the communal narrative woven together from the women's individual stories, or if I should really seek after that, since the narrative is ongoing. I found a solution through the inspiration of post-analysis techniques. "Assemblages are the active enlistment of external objects into the human cognitive system," Murphy Augustine quotes (2014:750). I decided to seek emic themes and compare them with etic themes found in the existing literature through a technique of assemblage in which I constantly interacted with all forms of data along with my own impressions. This hearkens to Murphy Augustine's method in which "Writing became *an assemblage*, a machining or putting together of participants' reading experiences with theoretical concepts" (2014:749).

Inspired by the concept of collage as analysis (Holbrook & Pourchier, 2014), after collecting the majority of my data I began to discover connections by arranging Post-It notes of concepts, themes and reactions on my bedroom wall. This tangible method of thematic analysis enabled me to visualize and manipulate themes as they emerged from the data, while not being constricted by my less preferred medium, the computer (Floersh et al, 2010:408). Thematic analysis involves finding consistent themes across study participants and comparing that with what has been found in other similar studies or research. The significance of a theme is valued over and above its frequency.

After my alternative approach to thematic analysis, I transferred my results to the computer, creating maps of the assemblage process with keys denoting the sources of the theme in question.

**Figure 3: Physical Representation of Developing Themes**

Relevant Theories

My goal was not to prove or disprove any theories, but to extract the impact of perceived barriers and facilitators on my participants' real lives. I do not propose that my results are generalizable as they come from a very specific and unique community of women within a unique society. However, throughout the process of data collection, I was reminded of and returned to a few theories from the existing literature which helped me to articulate some of the themes that started to emerge from the data.

As mentioned previously, Cimino's (2012) theory of exit prediction considers the variables of skills, intention, environmental constraints and societal context as determinants in the success of an individual's exit from the sex trade. While skills and environmental constraints are more obvious factors, the components of intention may be less apparent. These components are attitudes, norms and understanding of self-efficacy. Cimino defines norms as "the perception of significant others' expectations" and self-efficacy as "a person's belief that he/she can perform the target behavior under specific barriers or obstacles" (2012:1242).

To the previously proposed list of behavioral prediction factors, Cimino adds agency as "a moderator of intention," which she considers "a uniquely important feature of the prostitution lifestyle" (1245). Agency refers to power dynamics internal and external to a person, including an individual's actual control and *sense* of control. I found traces of each of these components in participants' exit narratives and have discussed them in context later in this paper.

Figure 4: Predictive Exit Theory for Street-level Sex Work
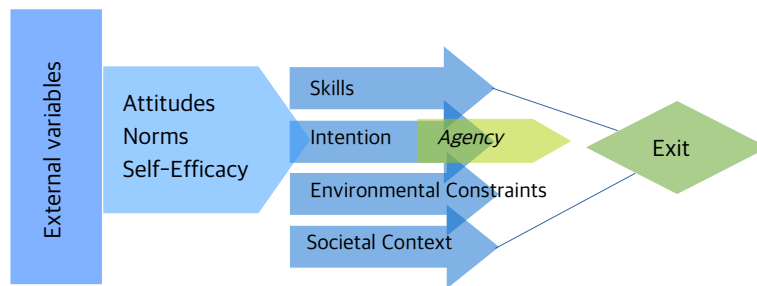

The influence of various factors and moderators on the behavioral
change resulting in exit from the sex trade, based on Cimino (2012)

It was also easy to detect signs of Baker et al's (2010) integrated model for exiting in the processes undergone by my research participants and those around them. The authors' proposed exit process integrated from existing literature moves the individual from immersion to awareness, deliberate preparation, initial exit, reentry and final exit. It is interesting to notice the focuses of the majority of my participants' narratives. Most participants chose to describe explicitly their "awareness" stage as a natural part of their

narratives. When prompted by my questions, they also had a lot to say about the "deliberate preparation" and "final exit" stages, but less explicitly stating instances of reentry or initial exit.

Figure 5: Facilitators of Sex Trade Exit
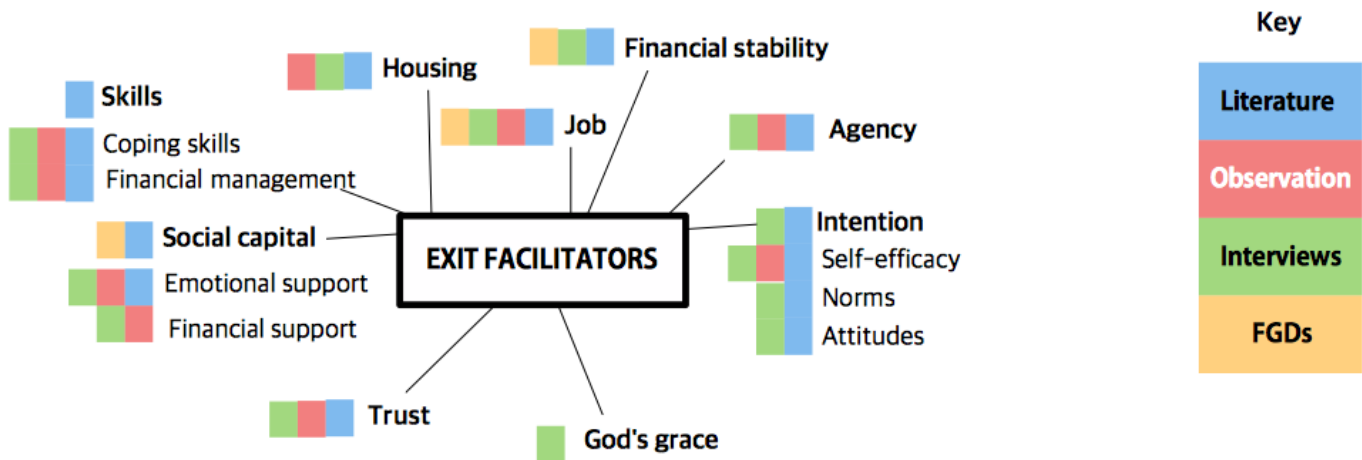
Facilitators and Motivators

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions evidenced the existence of both the expected exit facilitators and more nuanced motivators in the narratives of study participants. I have brought these under the same heading as in the case of behavioral change it is unrealistic to separate one from the other. According to Cimino's model (2012), attitudes, norms and self-efficacy constitute intention. In my study I have divided facilitators into structural, personal and spiritual, according to the perceptions of my study participants. These may be associated with Baker et al's proposed exit stage of deliberate preparation (2010).

Structural

Agency

Agency is one of the unique components of behavioral change within the sex industry as suggested by Cimino (2012). It is the ability to act which includes both physical and emotional control exhibited by an individual, and influences their intention to make a change. The complex web of systems within Kolkata's sex trade showed itself in the narratives of this study's participants and in observations made in the community. On the main road of the red light district in which I conducted my community observations, madams (keepers) were constantly present. Most of the women eat meals prepared by these madams, and live in brothel rooms managed by them.

Four participants shared that at some point they received none of the money payed by customers: "[T]hey took all the money. The one who brought me took all the money. They didn't give me any money"; "Those who are working under owners can't come out.

Owners don't allow them to come out." Unless they are able to escape or are removed by police, girls/women under complete control lack any agency. Many participants made mention of the *adhya* system in which the girls/women performing sex work receive only half of the fees paid by customers (often less), with the rest going to their madams in the form of rent, food and management fees. Women in the *adhya* system have somewhat increased agency, but the system remains stacked against them and they often lack mental agency from years of living under a keeper.

Outside of the *adhya* system, many women live in either daily/hourly rented rooms or they commute into the red light district every evening. Such women generally possess greater agency than those in formal systems, but many still have regular customers/partners ("*babus*") who abuse them and exploit them financially. As women move out of the systems of coercion into situations of greater agency, they find it easier to exit sex work.

Job Opportunities

All respondents were aided in the exit process by a job opportunity, as they are all currently employed and consider themselves to have completely exited the sex trade. For most, their job was the deciding factor in whether or not they left the line, such as in the case of one participant who said, "If we didn't have this job then we would have had to stay in line. We would have no choice. Where will we go?" On the other hand, a few who had exited previously were able to sustain their exit because of job stability. One participant put it this way: "I left the line because I had someone. I had a man. He used to give me money for food and rent, so I left the line. And then when I joined here I totally left the line." The job provides a steady income and dignity to the women, both of which are among top motivators in their exit processes.

Housing

One participant shared that she was able to exit the sex trade a "long time before" receiving her current employment. She associated this with the time she was able to get her own house and leave the brothel system. The rental fees for rooms and apartments in the red light districts surrounding the production unit are extremely high, making it difficult for women on fixed salaries to pay rent. Several participants said that they moved to a new house before or soon after getting a job outside of the sex trade.

Personal

Financial Stability

Financial stability acted as both a push and pull factor in the participants' narratives. The financial stability promised by a consistent job with benefits is a natural pull factor for women unsatisfied with the sex trade. However, interview participants suggested that achieving relative financial stability *before* exiting acts as a push factor for those with a negative attitude toward the sex trade. This includes paying off debt, which is a major concern for marginalized women in a community where buying on credit and taking loans with massive interest rates is the norm, especially for those with no social network as suggested by a focus group participant. For others who either have extenuating family circumstances or who are unable to justify adjusting to a low fixed salary of the jobs available to them, participants perceive that increased salaries in these businesses can

facilitate their exit. It is evident from their narratives that after passing through the initial training months in which trainees receive a stipend as opposed to full salary, more women were able to completely exit sex work.

Skills

The literature considers *personal skills* to be among the top facilitators of exit from the sex trade, mainly focusing on education and training (Bindel et al, 2014; Mayhew & Mossman, 2007; Dalla, 2006; Manopaiboon et al, 2003). Education and skills training are directly connected to job opportunities (discussed below) in the case of this study's participants, as the business at which they work provides a period of training before full-time employment. However, they do not constitute a facilitator in the case of this study's participants as the business has a policy of hiring based on desire for exit rather than based on possession of necessary skills.

Coping skills were significant in the women's narratives, including both saving money and making investments while in the sex trade and managing to support their families with a fixed income after joining the business. This phenomenon was also evident in my community observations as many women talked about how they were buying land and saving for their children's futures, although the extent to which this can be connected to exit cannot yet be measured.
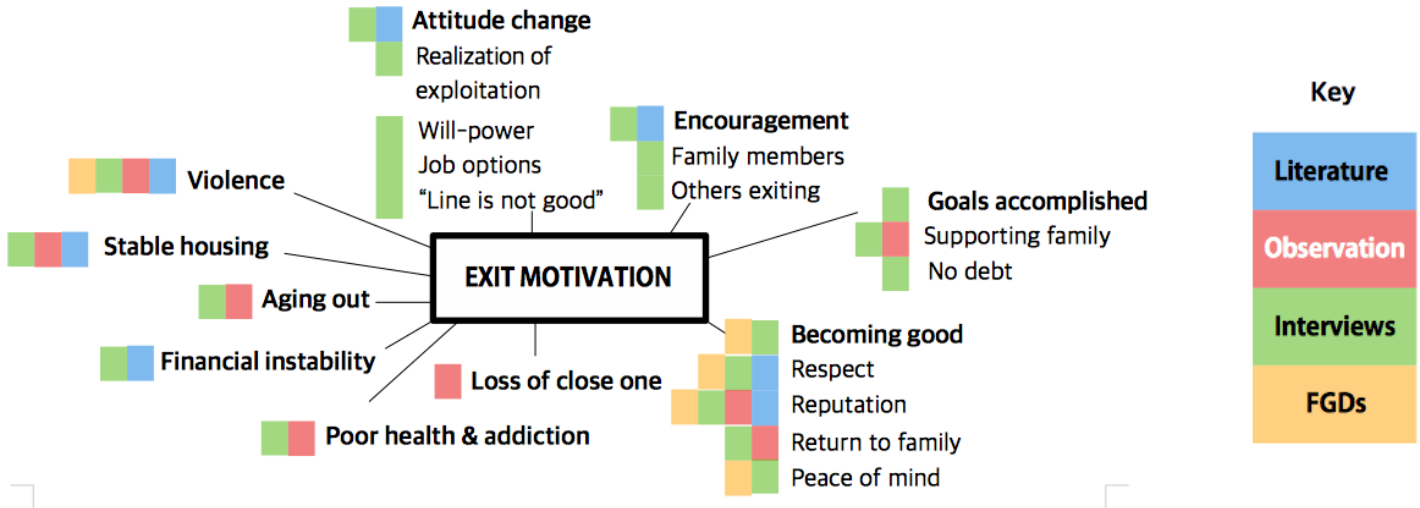
Social Capital

The existence of a supportive social network appears to have a positive impact on a woman's ability to exit. This includes both emotional and financial support. Participants in the final focus group discussion pointed out that without a social net to fall back into, a woman relies almost completely on her income to facilitate exit or sustain exit from the sex trade.

Internal Facilitators

In terms of financial management skills, the perceptions of this study's interview, focus group discussion and community observation participants support the claim that *perceived* financial management skills play a major part in a woman's decision whether or not to exit the sex trade. As one interview participant said, "If I think I will leave, no one can stop me; this is the main thing. There are many girls who don't leave by their own will. They think, 'If I will leave the line what will I eat? How will I manage every thing?' For this reason many girls stay in the line." It is evident that there are significant internal facilitators in the exiting process, with perceived skills falling under the heading of *self-efficacy.*

Figure 6: Motivators of Sex Trade Exit

Key
- Literature
- Observation
- Interviews
- FGDs

EXIT MOTIVATION
- Attitude change — Realization of exploitation; Will-power; Job options; "Line is not good"
- Violence
- Stable housing
- Aging out
- Financial instability
- Loss of close one
- Poor health & addiction
- Encouragement — Family members; Others exiting
- Goals accomplished — Supporting family; No debt
- Becoming good — Respect; Reputation; Return to family; Peace of mind

Motivators

Within the plethora of factors influencing a woman's exit from the sex trade in Kolkata exists a sub-section of facilitators I will call motivators. These factors facilitate the *decision* to leave the sex trade, while still requiring the presence of the above facilitators for actual exit to be possible. They are not only personal internal factors, but also social and structural.

Financial instability. Financial instability is both a barrier and a motivator of exiting the sex trade. This is partly due to the commercial exploitation that takes place within the trade. As part of the informal economy, the sex trade at its best naturally offers an inconsistent income. Part of this motivator also comes from the fact that when women reach a certain age they attract fewer customers, thus the phenomenon of 'aging out.' Many participants made mention of this as a major motivator for them leaving the sex trade, and said it would likely motivate those currently in the sex trade once they grew older. Women who age out of sex work often end up taking on management positions such as 'madams,' thus remaining part of the cycle of the trade. At an older age, the women tend to be outside of the most controlling systems in the trade, which also makes exiting a simpler process than it is for younger women. In the interviews, aging out was often associated with a change in attitude: "And for us, we are getting older. We can't work in line, and also we don't like it."

Change in attitude. Several women cited a change in attitude toward sex work as part of their exit narrative. Changes in attitude included realization of exploitation, increased willpower, learning about job options, and the prioritization of self-care over money. Upon realizing the extent to which they were being exploited financially within the sex trade, a few women ran away from their keepers. This was often linked to the *adhya* system and housing. "We were there [in line] all that time," one woman said, "for all that time we didn't understand. We also lived with a madam. And then we became a little wise-they took half of

what we used to earn… Then we saw, 'We are doing the difficult work and the owner is taking that much?' So I ran away." Other participants linked a gaining of knowledge to increased financial management and thus agency to start the exit process. This facilitator is directly linked to the exit stage of awareness (Baker et al, 2010).

Becoming good. One participant commented that, "those who want to be good like us, we know that [line] work is not good. Maybe the money is less, but this work is good for us." The topic of *becoming good* is both social and individual, as it has to do with social norms and individual women's response to those norms. Many women suggested that leaving the sex trade in itself constitutes becoming 'good,' but that it could only be accomplished with alternative work. Becoming good was viewed as increasing the respect of women both in their families and in the community. Women were particularly vocal about their concern for how their children view them, and how their children are viewed by others due to their employment.

One woman said, "I decided to move on from the line and do respectful work for myself and for my children's sake." The final focus group participants considered that peace of mind is also part of this becoming good. Many women live in fear of their family members knowing they are doing sex work, and exit from the trade releases them from that fear, along with physical and financial release from the system.

Goals accomplished. The interviews showed that while some women were able to run away at the realization of exploitation, for others the exit planning process was highly strategic and time consuming. A few women referenced accomplishing some financial goal before exiting the sex trade. These goals include supporting family in marriage and paying off debts or making down payments for houses. Gaining stable housing was also often associated with increased agency.

Encouragement. Dalla (2006) and Manopaiboon et al (2003) both suggest that the support of intimate partners, family and communities increase the likelihood of a woman leaving sex work or remaining exited. Indeed, the encouragement of some women's husbands/partners played a significant role in their exit narratives. This emotional encouragement was often tied to financial aid, but not always. One woman said that her partner gave her "courage to work" at the production unit. Other women received encouragement from women they knew or saw who had already exited and were working at the production unit.

Other motivators. Some negative motivators noted in interviews and community observations were violence, poor health and addiction, and loss of a close one. This final motivator is generally tied to duty to family, while the violence and health issues inherent in the sex trade in Kolkata prove to be personal motivators to transition to another place and/or lifestyle. One woman cited multiple abortions, while others referenced HIV/AIDS. Women mentioned the struggle of doing sex work with non-related infirmities such as malaria and broken bones due to the physical strain inherent to the work.

Spiritual: God's Grace

A theme that I had not expected to find in the interviews was that of spirituality. However, it is consistent with the findings of both Dalla (2006) and Mayer & Richardson

(2010), who discovered links between exit success and references to God or assimilation into a religious (Christian) community. The majority of this study's participants mentioned *God's grace* in reference to their ability to exit, several mentioning answered prayers and one suggesting that God changes the attitudes of women in order that they desire to leave the sex trade. One participant said, "After praying to God I got a job, then I joined here," and another "God by his grace gave me freedom work and I'm in this work."

Figure 7: Barriers Sex Trade Exit
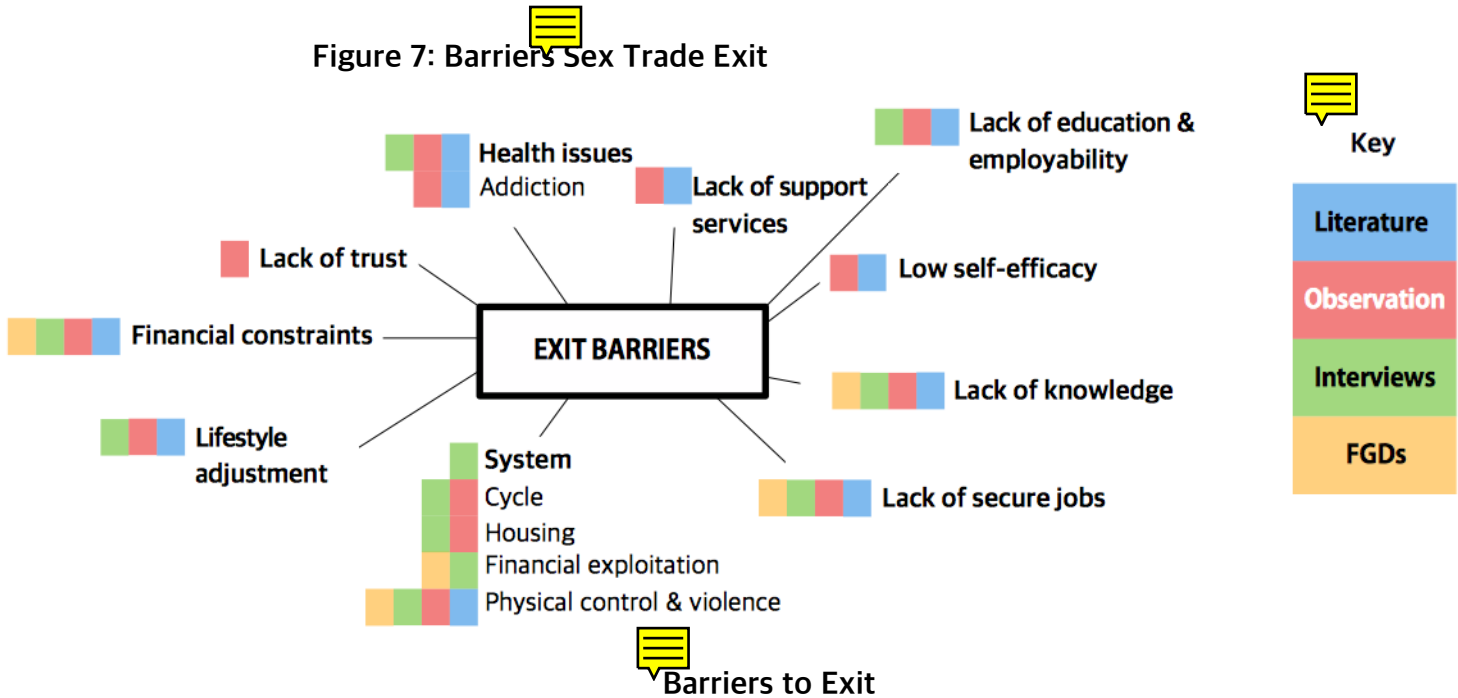
Barriers to Exit

It is possible to extrapolate from any of the above facilitators a hypothesis regarding potential barriers faced by women exiting the sex trade. Theoretically, just as increased intention and skills, reduced environmental constraints and supportive social contexts increase the likelihood of women exiting the sex trade, so do low intention, skills, high environmental constraints and unsupportive social contexts decrease the likelihood (Cimino, 2012). Baker et al (2010) suggest that exit barriers across the literature may be split into individual, relational, societal and structural factors. Once again, these factors overlap and influence one another, however they provide appropriate delineations for the barriers discussed in this study.

Individual Barriers

Just as there exist many internal facilitators to exit, there also exist a host of internal barriers. These range from factors largely dependent on personality like lifestyle adjustment and self-efficacy to factors stemming from individual history and family situations like lack of knowledge, financial constraints and health issues.

Lifestyle Adjustment

Bindel et al (2014) state that women in their U.K.-based study who were making a significant amount of money in the sex trade found it difficult to adjust to a lifestyle required

after exit with a fixed income. Similarly, this study found a common thread in both the women's narratives and their commentary on society of women saying of the income offered by their production unit: "this money is not enough for them." For some, it is a matter of extreme financial difficulties (which often drove them to sex work in the first place), while for others it is a matter of learning to manage with less money. It is interesting to note that all study participants expressed confidence in not returning to sex work. Many made mention of themselves and their coworkers as being "different" in their ability to manage with a lower salary.

Low Self-efficacy

Part of success in behavioral change comes from confidence in one's ability to change. Although this was only explicitly discussed in interviews in reference to lifestyle adjustment, I saw many signs of low self-efficacy in my community observations. These included a high rate of suicide, a lack of confidence in ability to learn, and an unwillingness to make decisions.

Lack of Knowledge

Among other individual factors, Baker et al (2010) suggest that a lack of knowledge of services creates a barrier to exit. This theme was clearly evident in my interviews and community observation. There exists a fear of authorities, including madams and police officers, in the community, which restricts the mental agency of women. Interviews suggested that women are often not aware of their own commercial exploitation until something brings their attention to it. Additionally, one participant said that many women do not know about the employment opportunities available to them at businesses such as theirs, although my community observations suggest that the presence of their production unit among others is well-known. Without an understanding of their own situations and the potential to get out, many women are restricted from exiting because "they don't know any place other than this."

Financial Constraints

Both Dalla (2006) and Manopaiboon et al (2003) confirm the influence of economic factors on exit ability and exit success. This study shows that for participants, financial constraints regularly result in inability to exit, delayed exit, or reentry into the sex trade. The inability to exit due to financial constraints was linked by participants to lifestyle adjustment, discussed above. One participant in a particularly difficult family and financial situation reentered the sex trade in order to make enough money to pay off debts and enable her daughter to be married, after which she made a final exit. She told me the exact date of her exit, something no other participant shared.

Health Issues

A lack of discussion of the barrier psychological trauma creates in decreasing agency through emotional dependency in this study does not prove its absence in the lives of the women. From my observations, one interview and comments made during the final focus group discussion, it is evident that chemical addiction plays a role in the lives of women in Kolkata's sex trade. However, this study is looking specifically at *perceived* barriers and facilitators, and as psychological trauma and substance abuse did not come up as a significant theme, I will not pursue it further.

Relational Barriers: Agency

It may be argued that the effects of trauma create barriers in the form inculturation of control in the women's lives. One woman described her entrance to the sex trade in the following way:

> At that time we didn't know that he would bring us to line work; at that time I was very young. He brought us to a hotel and did bad things to us. So we thought, 'What happened?' That time I hadn't even started my period, and nobody had touched us before. After that he took us out of the hotel and put us in the main line. For one year after that, he didn't give me the money I earned (Participant, Semi-structured Interview.

The sexual and commercial exploitation of this pre-adolescent girl was not an anomaly among the narratives shared by this study's participants. Many shared stories about how they or others were physically controlled and manipulated by others, some for many years and from a very young age. The resulting physical and emotional loss of agency is a major barrier for women to overcome in the process of exiting.

Societal Barriers
Violent Social Systems

Community observation revealed the prevalence of violence in the red light district, including hearing stories of murder and suicide, witnessing frequent physical fights and evidence of self-harm by women in sex work. Participants also shared instances of violence against them, and shared their knowledge about the barrier to exit that violence creates: "But for those with a *babu,* the *babu* takes all the money and beats them too. Those girls will have to stay like this."

Stigma

A less obvious societal barrier is the stigma faced by women who are poor and lack education, especially those known to have been in sex work. A final focus group discussion confirmed several comments made in interviews regarding lack of job opportunities. One woman said, "And the women like us… If we work in other people's houses there are also problems. I have also done work in other people houses: that is also not happiness." Abuse and exploitation are faced by poor women in many sectors of work, so according to one focus group participant many women feel that it is no better for them to get a job outside the sex trade than to remain.

Structural Barriers

The overall lack of job opportunities is one of the major barriers to exiting the sex trade globally that straddles the societal and the structural. Another such barrier is the lack of education and training possessed by the majority of women in this study. A final structural barrier is the exploitative housing market in Kolkata's red light areas. In the area in which I conducted community observation, once outside of the *adhya* system it is not uncommon for women to rent brothel rooms for 200-500 INR per day. Without a high-

paying job such as sex work can be for some, it is impossible for many younger women to exit if they wish to remain in the community. According to my interview participants, many women take large loans to make down payments for rooms in the red light area, often from the brothel owners themselves. This also results in entrapment.

Sustaining Exit

In the sections above I have made mention of both "exiting" and "sustaining exit." In fact, the topic of sustaining exit was more of a focus for my study participants than initial exit. This makes sense, as all participants currently have jobs which largely facilitated their initial exit. Bindel et al (2014) state that the exiting process among women in non-street-based sex work in the U.K. revolves more around internal motivations and emotions than structural factors. I had assumed that, given the highly controlled system from which they are exiting, for the women in my study practical and structural support would be of greatest importance. However, according to their perceptions, when it comes to *remaining exited* the impetus is indeed largely internal.

When asked why some women choose to remain in or return to the sex trade, most women stated that financial constraints kept people from exiting or sustaining exit. However, they also stated that even with financial issues they themselves were able to exit. They stated that they were different. "We have left the line. We have received freedom, so our story is different," one participant stated. Another, "[W]e have left the line and try to manage. We don't want to return to line work. But not everyone is like us, that they will try to support their family in these difficulties."

What is it that makes these women different from those who do not sustain their exit? It would be interesting to conduct a comparative study of women who do and do not sustain exit from the sex trade, but this would be incredibly risky for the women who are presently in the trade. Even without such a study, it is possible to glean from my data the participants' perception of what aids in exit sustainability. According to participants, exit sustainability depends on job and financial stability, satisfaction in new life, social stigma, God's grace and personality.

Job and Financial Stability

The financial stability offered by their current jobs enables women to support their families, specifically raising their children to have a better life than they have had. Family was the top motivator for sustaining exit mentioned by participants who have children. One woman said, "My treasure is helping my daughters to study more and not letting them enter the line. And I will make their future bright, my daughters will live a good life and my family will have a good life– that is my treasure. The way I was in line, my daughters will not stay there." One participant even said that what the business has offered her means so much to her that she would remain exited for that reason alone.

Satisfaction in New Life

Several interviewees and focus group participants made mention of the importance of the emotional support they receive in their workplace in sustaining exit from the sex trade, and the happiness they feel at work. Association with a new group appears to enable women to have attained a new identity outside of the sex trade. However, the new life

associated with exiting the sex trade does not only involve work but the prospect of leaving the city and returning to the village (where most of the participants came from initially). Satisfaction was also linked to a stable income and the ability to participate in "good work."

Social Stigma

Part of this satisfaction comes from the ability to "say to our family that we got a good job." "Now I'm walking among people proudly," one participant said, "I can show my face to everyone." The social stigma associated with sex work provides a negative motivation for exit and sustaining exit, but the subsequent peace of mind referenced by both interview and focus group participants provides a stronger positive motivation.

God's Grace

Just as it surfaced as a facilitating factor in women's exit narratives, God's grace was perceived by interview participants as playing a role in their ability to sustain exit. "If we look at our lives, they are full of darkness," said one participant. "From that darkness we have to come into light. And God brought us there. Otherwise where would I be?" Participants associated God's grace with peace, food, supportive partners, financial stability, the ability to learn new skills, the success of the business, hope, and the acquisition of knowledge.

> I used to pray to God that someone will come in my life who can look after me[...] He can bring me out of the line. Like this I used to pray. I used to say that my husband did this to me, and for that reason I came to the line, and if someone comes in my life... Because I can't stay alone my whole life, and can't take someone in front of my children. By praying like this, within a year of leaving the line God provided me a man. A man came to my life and brought me out from here (Participant, Semi-structured Interview).

Two types of people

> She will be able to leave the line because she didn't come here by her choice. If I have joined by choice, I can't stay here [production unit]; I can't leave line work because I am envious for money. So if I will be able to leave the line, I will leave. But if I think I won't, then as much money you as give me, I won't be able to leave line work. There are two types of people (Participant, Focus Group Discussion #1).

The topic of "two types of people" came up often enough in interviews and focus group discussions to warrant significant consideration. The table below outlines what I understand to be the differences between the types of people study participants described as being more or less able to sustain exit from the sex trade. This should not be understood as complete descriptions of any one person, but rather a characteristics that are seen to either positively or negatively impact exit sustenance.

Table 2: Likelihood of Sustaining Exit

More likely to sustain exit	Less likely to sustain exit
Attitude towards sex work: negative	Attitude towards sex work: impartial/positive
Reason for entering: force or need	Reason for entering: choice
Strong financial management skills	Weak financial management skills
Strong willpower	Reduced willpower

Attitude towards line. Participants often referred to a change in mindset which affected their attitude toward sex work and subsequent ability to sustain exit. References were made alternately to an inner voice, mentality, personality, gaining knowledge (as discussed in the previous section), prioritization of either money or exit, finally the impetus of becoming good (also discussed previously), and reason for entering the sex trade.

Reasons for entering the sex trade were perceived to be especially significant in forming a woman's attitude toward the line. Eight participants described being trafficked into the sex trade in some way, while most others stated that they entered because of extreme financial pressure. Many interview and focus group participants said that entrance into the sex trade due to need or force would result in a negative attitude toward sex work and thus a stronger desire and ability to exit and sustain exit than is common for women who have entered the sex trade because of their "nature" (*shobhab*) or for the sake of making extra money.

> I myself don't like the line any more. My mind is bitter towards the line. Now I want girls like me to come out from there and do a good job. Because the line is for two days (few days), not for the whole life– just for a few days or a few moments. Because earning by selling your body is different from earning by working hard. With this money we are happy in our lives, but that was not happiness. For that reason I like this job (Participant, Semi-structured Interview).

The participants' differentiating themselves from women who are still in the sex trade was suggested by one production unit leader to infer that they are distancing themselves from that identity and re-identifying themselves with their new lives. This seems likely based on the frequent use of comparisons in the women's narratives, and is backed up by Baker et al's category of new identity formation and creation of "ex role" in the process of maintaining the behavioral changes associated with exit (2010).

Financial management. Financial management skills were mentioned as a significant facilitator of exit, however study participants linked these skills more to exit retention than to initial exit. Many interview participants mentioned that what makes them "different" is their ability to manage with less money than they used to see when they were in the sex trade, and that this ability has helped them sustain their exit. Both interviews and

community observation showed that some women also use their time in the sex trade to make significant investments for their families. The general perception of participants was that "all people are not the same. If I earn a lot of money by staying there, then why will I come [exit]?" One interview participant and participants in the final focus group discussion considered participation in sex work for money to be "a kind of addiction."

Willpower. Strength of will was also associated with ability to sustain exit from the sex trade. This was linked to *perceived* financial management skills due to the fact that women in the trade have "seen a lot of money," whether they were able to keep it themselves or not. Again, participants considered themselves to have strong willpower, which makes them different from other women. It should be noted, however, that they did not seem to say these things disdainfully, but rather granting that reduced willpower is the norm for women in the sex trade, especially regarding finances.

Resilience

Sanders (2007) states that, "[I]ndividual resilience is located within a structured and social reality whereby trapping factors restrict movement out of sex work and make permanent removal from the deviant career a complex and lengthy process" (p. 91). She criticizes the work of Månsson & Hedin (1999) for giving too much importance to individual coping skills and resilience of women in the exit process. However, my study suggests that once a woman is in the position to exit and has made the first attempt at doing so, her resilience is indeed perceived to be of high importance in her ability to remain exited, or achieving exit success.

> Thus it is our contention that the individual's emotional commitment, as it is expressed through dreams and positive illusions, lies at the very heart of the process of change. It constitutes one of the most significant strategies that the women develop to overcome the various strains and challenges inherent in the break with prostitution (Månsson & Hedin, 1999:75).

Coming from a Western perspective, the resilience of women according to Månsson & Hedin (1999) is largely individual. As I have learned from community observation, interviews, focus group discussions and my literature review, however, Indian culture is much more relational and family-centered. Even after suffering from the humiliation of poverty, the violence of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, often rejected by their families and stigmatized by society, these women exhibit significant resilience. In their narratives, participants' motivations consistently surrounded supporting their families and ensuring their children have a better life than they have had. This phenomenon has been labelled by Lucinda Spaulding (2009) as *altruistic resilience,* and constitutes the central motivator for sustaining exit in the perception of my study participants. In her study of resilience among Sudanese refugees in the United States, Spaulding says,

> Altruistic resilience is being resilient for the consideration and welfare of someone other than oneself… It is reflected in an individual's decision to thoughtfully and intentionally place the well-being of another ahead of his or her own. Thus, altruistic resilience is

operating when individuals subjugate their own needs and desires to those of another person (2009:185).

Concern Regarding Resilience

In the final focus group discussion, participants expressed concern that what may appear to be strategic planning on the part of women with some control in the line is in fact manipulation by family members. They have heard of many women who are making money in sex work and sending it to their family or buying land, but doubt that the land is being purchased in their names, thus suggesting that the commercial exploitation has simply moved hands from a madam or pimp to the women's family members. Some members of this group were fieldworkers and social workers who meet on a daily basis with women presently in the sex trade. They are concerned that the women spend their whole lives working for their families, and when they grow old their families will not be there to take care of them, neither will they have anything saved for themselves.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Summary

This study aimed to discern the influence of perceived barriers and facilitators on the exit narratives of women from Kolkata's sex trade through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and community non-participant observation. The vast and complex nature of the social structures and processes involved in entrance to and exit from the sex trade in Kolkata was revealed throughout the research process. Current literature on the subject of exit has much to offer in the form of external knowledge. Through my emic study I sought to discern the issues of importance to the community members themselves, then consider where the literature agrees or disagrees.

Data collection resulted in a considerable amount of data, which I sifted through to discover the major perceived themes of barriers and facilitators of the exit process for women working at a business near several of Kolkata's red light areas. The analysis resulted in an unexpected focus on sustaining exit sustenance in participant narratives and opinions, a consistent differentiating of themselves with women who have not exited or sustained exit, and the perceived primacy of intention in facilitating exit for those who have job opportunities available to them.

Limits to Generalizability

Early in the process of data collection I realized that the mentality of my participants was likely highly influenced by their work environment. Although I never used the word "freedom," it was referred to consistently throughout interviews and focus group discussions. The intentionally created alternative community of the production unit and the counseling afforded to all participants have likely influenced the ability of this study's participants to achieve new identity formation, view their narratives in light of where they are currently, have confidence in not reentering due to job stability, and likely other factors that I am unaware of. Thus, my results cannot be assumed to hold for women who exit to other types of jobs (if any), women from other red light areas in the country or across the world.

Future Studies

My highly qualitative approach to analysis relied significantly on my impression of the importance of various themes. The broad overview I have provided skims the surface of the large amount of data collected in semi-structured interviews. I have not attempted to quantify the relative importance of each facilitator, as it varies in each individual's account, nor compared the similarities and differences between the method in which women who had been out of the sex trade for varying amounts of time told their stories. Based on my research, other potentially significant studies may include a survey of current social services offered to women in the sex trade and their impact on exit intention over time, as well as an in-depth study of what increases internal agency. Such studies may help organizations serve the community in a way that increases women's likelihood to retain exit in the long run, while still understanding and affirming the varied processes inherent in exiting.

Output

After presenting my research to the leadership team of the business and organization at which this study took place, I plan to produce a specialized report of findings based on what the team found to be significant, including some of their feedback. I will first, however, submit the final draft of this paper to the organization and similar organizations. Eventual publication would depend on the feedback I receive from those to whom I submit my findings.

Community Benefits

The immediate benefit of the research to participants differs depending on the type of participant. Participants in semi-structured interviews had the opportunity to narrate their exit stories, in a process that will ideally help them understand their personal strengths and motivations that brought them to their current point of exit. Several participants distinctly expressed interest and positive feelings regarding the process of sharing their stories, one associating it with lightening the load on her mind. An unexpected effect of recruitment was the negative emotions expressed by one or several potential participants who chose not to participate, as mentioned to me by business leadership.

It is my hope that the participation of women in both focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews will ultimately benefit them by making them partakers in the process that aims to facilitate the exit of their friends, family members and neighbors. They have provided information that until now has not been gathered strategically; these stories may shape the future of the organization and thus the future of the community. It is hoped that the process of sharing their opinions in focus group discussions and interviews has made the women consider more deeply how they can influence the community around them. Perhaps findings will inspire women to involve themselves in their neighbors' journeys out of the sex trade to the extent that they are able.

Regarding Partner Organization

I was consistently impressed by signs of the positive influence this study's partner organization and business have had on the lives of participants. While there were understandably many comments made surrounding the desire for increased salary, narratives reflected a deep appreciation for the work done at the business and the significance of the support offered both in the business and organization. It appears that employees are acting as role models in their communities, something that I understand to be at the very heart of the business' original vision. As is obvious from this study, not only are jobs a major need among women desiring to exit the sex trade, but so are stability, a new and supportive community, encouragement and trust: all things that it seems this business and organization are offering to those who exit.

As services expand and trust continues to build in the community, I believe that the mandate of the organization to serve the women who remain in the sex trade will be of great significance. I acknowledge that there are several organizations and businesses across the city working for the increased freedom of women and girls in Kolkata, specifically for those forced into the sex trade through coercion, exploitation and financial desperation. I hope that an increased and shared understanding of the many factors at play in the women's lives, their own perceptions, and successful contextual responses will encourage and improve these organizations and businesses for the benefit of society as a whole. Perhaps the city will itself eventually become a role model in its exit from exploitation.

CHAPTER VI: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

I had intended to write a section on theology as a backdrop to my own thoughts regarding the subject matter of my study: namely, freedom. However, throughout the research process it became clear that I was hearing the story of God's work from the mouths of the women I interviewed. Therefore, in this section I will integrate a Biblical

understanding of freedom and flourishing with God's actions today from the stories of the women. I consider it a reflection on an experiential theology that comes at the intersection of such stories.

When I Run I Feel God's Pleasure: Why Freedom Is Our Birthright

The first question that I must ask myself is: why freedom? I grew up in a creative home where my parents gave my sisters and me many opportunities for self-expression and independence. I studied visual art and music throughout high school and college, and discovered my love for language learning. I delight in seeing people express their promise. In the words of Eric Liddell in the classic film *Chariots of Fire* (1981): "I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast. And when I run I feel his pleasure." I do believe God delights in his children *being free.* My understanding of freedom begins with two concepts: God's creation with the empowerment to flourish and the purchase of creation by the Son of God.

Created to Flourish

The first concept tells us *the kinds of lives* we were created to live. In the Genesis account of creation, humanity is made in conjunction with the rest of nature. We are to act as managers, caretakers, namers and friends. Friends of God with freedom to roam and enjoy and eat. God *commands* Eve and Adam to be fruitful: to develop healthily and to multiply. Even throughout the history of Israel, God only gives increased authority structures as Israel demands them. The prophets speak against the burdens the authorities place on the poor. *God created humanity to live abundantly and without excessive constraints, tasting the goodness of his creation and knowing the goodness of being close to him.* This stands directly against the realities of those in situations against their will due to heavy burdens, debt, threat or violence.

Bought At a Price

The second concept tells us our value and *to whom we belong.* The Apostle Paul says, "You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings" (1 Corinthians 7:23). The purchase and sale of human beings as commodities stands against the Christian understanding that we belong to Christ in whose death and resurrection we were redeemed from the ownership of all else and all others. Though in sin we distance ourselves from our Maker, in Christ we have been brought near once and for all. Who can separate us again?

"I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable [pimps, madams, traffickers, customers]—absolutely *nothing* can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us" (Romans 8:38-39). *God has called us his own. He has shown his passionate love for us by dying for our sakes and taking on the things that should be on our shoulders, removing any distance they might create between him and us.*

<div align="center">Claiming a New Identity</div>

Because of Christ, new life is possible even for those whose lives have been so crushed by the evil one. A line from Hannah Hurnard's *Hinds' Feet on High Places* sums it up so well: "He shines upon me and makes me to rejoice, and has atoned to me for all that was taken from me and all that was done against me." (Hurnard, 2013, Chapter 6, para. 19). It is of course on this hope that businesses such as the one at which I conducted my interviews are founded. But this is more than a hope claimed by one group for another group. During the course of my study, I found that the hope of the resurrection is being claimed by the women themselves as they establish new identities.

They Are Never Weak

During my second interview, my interviewee told me, "[M]en think we are weak as women. But is not true. Women are not weak. If women stand on their own feet, they are never week. They are never weak." This claiming of an identity other than what you have been labelled is a prevalent theme throughout Scripture.

Israel from Slavery to Freedom

The central image of identity transformation in the Old Testament is of course the Exodus narrative in which God moves the entire nation of Israel from enslavement to freedom. God shows his mercy on a broken and abused people, responding to their cries by raising up a deliverer to bring them to a place he had set aside for them. In this they are able to *reclaim* their identity as God's chosen people, something Egypt had stolen from them.

Rahab's New Identity

In the book of Joshua, Rahab, a woman in sex work, took great courage to participate in God's plans for Israel. Stepping outside of the labels society had placed on her (Fortener, 2015), she housed and hid the Israeli spies in Jericho, confident that "the Lord has given you the land" (Joshua 2:9). In so doing, she saved her entire family and claimed a place among the people of great faith throughout history (Hebrews 11:31).

In Christ a New Creation

This identity transformation is available to not only all people, but all of creation. Since the moment of the Fall, God has been working to make things new. Through the prophet Isaiah, he says, "behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind" (Isaiah 65:17). Paul says that anyone who is in Christ "is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17). Even a memory of the old, the dark and the broken will not remain. In the Revelation to John, he sees the very same:

> And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts." (Revelation 21:4-6)

Becoming 'Good'

The women who are finding freedom from the sex trade are claiming their part in God's new creation along the lines of both Israel and Rahab. Their narratives evidence the fact that God is working in their lives, and has been since before their exit. Like the Israelites, their calls have been heard, and they have been brought up into a better place. Like Rahab, they have all taken courageous steps that have resulted in life and freedom for themselves and their families. And yet, like all who walk on this earth, their struggles are not over yet. All of this becomes part of what many women talk about as "becoming good."

Respect and Place

When the women referred to the desire to "become good" as being part of their motivation to leave sex work, they talked about their desire to have respect, both in their family and in society. This means new work, and constitutes a new identity. One woman said of sex work, "This work isn't good... In this work there is a lot money but no respect. Respect does not have a price." Alternately, another said of the production unit at which they are employed, "I have respect, here I'm doing a good work in a family." This shift from shame to respect *plus* a new working community which they consider a family (others also used this word) reflects the newness that God is working into their lives: the new identities he is giving each of them.

God at Work In Our Lives

Many attributed "becoming good" outright to God's work in their lives. They said that because of his grace they have overcome the challenges of exiting the sex trade, getting jobs, being able to do the work required, and supporting their families. To be able to claim that the Creator and Ruler of the universe is working for your benefit is a far cry from the mentality of a victim. For all they have been through in their lives, these women are willing and able to give the glory to God for getting them where they are today.

There are other times in their stories when the women referred to a change of heart or a decision either that they could not explain or that came from someone else, and put them on the path out of the sex trade. One participant said, "But my mind told me, 'you should take a good path, don't go on the bad path.' That time I listened to what my mind said." Another said, "Then one day I don't know what happened, I came searching for this place [production unit]." I believe that such moments were times when the Holy Spirit was speaking into their spirits.

Oh yes, people of Zion, citizens of Jerusalem, your time of tears is over. Cry for help and you'll find it's grace and more grace. The moment he hears, he'll answer. Just as the Master kept you alive during the hard times, he'll keep your teacher alive and present among you. Your teacher will be right there, local and on the job, urging you on whenever you wander left or right: "This is the right road. Walk down this road." (Isaiah 30:19-21)

A Struggle that Never Ends

Yet the struggle does not end at exit. Nor do many women ever find exit. Many women call sex work "the dark path." This brings to mind the death-shadow valley of Psalm 23. For some, the death-shadow means perpetrating the very crimes of which you were a

victim when you were young, for the sake of survival. Whether in the line or out of the line, the women face struggles often related to health, finances and family unrest. One woman shared how her life has been a series of trials, and her happiness and peace in her new life is still burdened by her ill health. "The struggles never end," she said. I doubt if I will ever understand the cost of those words to her.

Every day at noon, a fieldworker steps onto the main road of a large red light area and opens the door to a brightly-lit room. She sits there with the women from the area who come and chat, paint their nails, drink tea, share their delights and deep sorrows. "God here among us, light in the midst of us," as the old Anglican prayer says. The presence of Immanuel.

On the other side of the neighborhood, a community of women works. Yes, they learn and create, but I understand now that they also counsel and support each other. A workroom becomes more than a workroom in the presence of the Spirit of Life. The women have become a healing presence to each other.

A strong, large, wooden cross hangs in the main courtyard of the production unit, reminding staff daily of the God who suffers-with. I can't imagine anything more profound. I can't imagine anything else would suffice.

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Appendix 2: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What is your current age?
2. How long have you worked here?
3. How old were you when you entered the sex trade?
4. What system(s) were you under in the trade?
5. How old were you when you exited?
6. What do you think makes most women stay in the line or return?
7. Tell me about the time you decided to leave the sex trade. (Consider: exit–re-entry–exit, when, why, who helped, who prevented, what made it more difficult, what made it easier)
8. Do you feel confident that you will not re-enter? Why or why not?

NB: Aside from the initial demographic questions, these will comprise more of a schedule of topics than specific questions to be asked every participant, due to the narrative nature of the responses I hope to receive.

Appendix 3: Focus Group Discussion Questions

Beginning-of-research focus group:
1. What does it mean to leave line work? When has a woman "successfully" exited?
2. I want to learn about the factors enabling and preventing women from leaving the line- what is important for me to consider?
3. What are some common exit strategies that you know of?
4. What difficulties face women after leaving the line?

End-of-research focus group:
1. Sometimes women use the phrase "I got freedom", sometimes "I left the line" and sometimes "I came from the line." What is the difference?
2. Do you think it's true that it's more difficult to leave the line for women who have "chosen" to join? Do women really choose to join?
3. What do you think women learn from their struggles in line that helps them sustain exit?
4. How important do you think the following factors are in determining the ease of a woman leaving the line? [Here I list some themes that theoretically have come up during interviews]

NB:"The line" is local phraseology for the sex trade.

Appendix 4: IRB Approval

Azusa Pacific University

Institutional Review Board

Office of Research and Grants
PO Box 7000
Azusa, CA 91702

Tel: 626.815.2036
Fax: 626.815.2087

DATE: April 22, 2015

TO: Miriam Westin

FROM: Lewis Bonney, Ph.D., Chair, Institutional Review Board

IRB ID NUMBER: #40-15

PROJECT TITLE: Planning for Freedom: Patterns in Sex Trade Exit Narratives Among Women in Kolkata

Azusa Pacific University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your research proposal by Full Board Review for the period of April 20, 2015 through April 19, 2016.

Researcher's Responsibilities:

1.   For those whose research involves surveying any portion of the APU population, contact should be made with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) for scheduling.
2.   Submit a Request for Revisions or Additions if you intend to alter your research protocol in any way (see the Institutional Review Board Handbook, p. 56)
3.   All protocol deviations, unanticipated or serious adverse events, must be reported to the IRB within one week. (see the Institutional Review Board Handbook, p. 19)
4.   Submit a yearly Request for Renewal of Continuing Research form (IRB handbook, p. 54) or a Closure of Research Report form (IRB Handbook, p.58) prior to the anniversary of the date of most recent approval by the IRB.

Disclaimer The Institutional Review Board at Azusa Pacific University is charged with oversight of protection of human subjects in experimental research. Receiving IRB approval does not constitute institutional approval of the project by Azusa Pacific University. If the responsible investigator believes that the project might be inconsistent with the mission and values of Azusa Pacific University or potentially not represent Azusa Pacific University in a favorable light, it is recommended that the responsible investigator contact the dean in your School or College at APU.

For assistance please contact the Institutional Review Board Coordinator at 626.815.2036.